

*A life sketch of*

# Emmerette Louisa Davis Randall

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1818 – 1898

Emmerette Louisa Davis Randall was born May 18, 1818 at Livonia, Livingston, New York to Asa and Sarah Ann ‘Sally’ Richardson Davis. Between 1830 and 1831 the Davis family moved from Livonia to Munson, Geauga (Medina), Ohio.

Emmerette and her oldest sister, Roxanna, were introduced to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints soon after arriving in Munson. Missionaries from the Church taught them about their basic beliefs and challenged the girls to read the Book of Mormon. Emmerette and Roxanna accepted the challenge and soon requested to be baptized and became



members of the Church. This was not a popular thing to do, as there were many enemies of the Church who made life uncomfortable for members. Emmerette was determined to follow her conscience, and from the day of her baptism she became committed to the decision she made.

Munson was not far from Kirtland County, Ohio, which was the headquarters of the Church at that time. Emmerette took what opportunities she could to gather with other members and learn more about the principles of the gospel. She eagerly learned all she could and gained a firm testimony that she safeguarded all of her life.

About this same time, Emmerette met Alfred Randall who had moved to Munson with his family in 1820. They were married January 9, 1834, at Munson, Geauga (Medina), Ohio. At the time of her marriage, Emmerette was not yet sixteen years of age, and Alfred was twenty three. Family records contain the following quote, “Alfred Randall married a lady who was a believer in the ‘Mormon’ religion and soon embraced the same faith for himself.”\*

Nine children were eventually born to Emmerette and Alfred: Charles Franklin 1835-1904 and Sarah Lavern 1838-1857 both born in Ohio; Alfred Jason 1845-1907 born in Nauvoo;

and Emmerette Louisa 1849-1850; Levi Leander 1850-1893; Allison Roxanna 1853-1854; Davis Richard 1855-1856; Charlotte Ann 1858-1860 and Martha Jane 1860-1938 all born in Salt Lake City, Utah. Emmerette was no stranger to sorrow. Only four out of her nine children lived to maturity and married. These children were Charles Franklin, Alfred Jason, Levi Leander and Martha Jane. Four of their children died before their third birthday. Their second child and oldest daughter, Sarah Lavern died in Salt Lake City at the age of eighteen years.

Emmerette and Alfred's humble home was always open to family, friends and the leadership of the Church. Their commitment to the Church and their desire to support their leaders was evident as they began years of service together.

During her first years of marriage, Emmerette was often left alone as Alfred traveled with Church leaders to preach the gospel and conduct other Church business. He was chosen on a number of occasions to accompany the Prophet Joseph Smith as he appeared before the courts on different charges that he was accused of. Emmerette was often left to care for their home and property, as well as keep herself and their small children safe. Persecution at the hands of mobs, which took place at this time in the Church's history, was a day to day occurrence for Emmerette and Alfred.

Emmerette helped Alfred move their family to various temporary settlements including Far West and Quincy. They moved to Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois in 1838. This area had been chosen as a site where the members of the Church could gather, rebuild, and be free from those who hated them. The Randalls became actively involved in every aspect of their new community. Emmerette helped Albert establish a home where they could raise their family and worship as they wished.

The Randalls helped with the building of the Nauvoo Temple. Emmerette filled Relief Society assignments to cook, sew, mend clothing and provide for the men who worked on the construction of the Temple.

One of the darkest experiences of her life took place June 27, 1844. Alfred had accompanied Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum to Carthage, Illinois. Upon their arrival, the Smiths were placed in custody and put in the Carthage Jail. Church members waited in Nauvoo to learn the fate of the men who were not only close friends, but also the leaders of their faith. Emmerette's worry was two fold as she knew Albert would protect the men to the end if need be.

On the evening of June 27<sup>th</sup>, just before sundown, the animals around the city of Nauvoo began a most peculiar thing. Somewhere a dog started to howl – a low, mournful sound that carried for blocks. Another dog took it up, and then another, and if that were not odd enough, the cattle joined in, lowing and bellowing from stables and pastures, barns and milking sheds. Soon the whole city was filled with the eerie sound of animals crying out in seeming pain. It sent chills down Emmerette's back and only added to the great heaviness that she was already feeling. Later that night, she learned that the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum had been martyred.

Two days later, Emmerette and Alfred were among the mourners who passed by the Smith brothers and paid their last respects. This period of time was extremely difficult for the membership of the Church; but Emmerette's testimony never wavered. Her determination to follow the Lord and continue the work of the Church only grew stronger.

Mob threats and violence escalated after the Prophet's death. The Randalls joined with other members of the Church in making preparations to leave the area. The Nauvoo Temple was a priority for the Saints, and every effort was made to speed its completion. What a day of celebration when the temple was dedicated May 1, 1846. Prior to this date some temple ordinances were being performed in areas already completed within the Temple. Emmerette and Alfred were participants in obtaining their own ordinances on January 21, 1846.

Emmerette and her husband and family endured many hardships and persecutions, which plagued the membership of the Church in Nauvoo. In 1846 the Randalls left their home in Nauvoo, and many of their possessions, and moved across the Mississippi River to Winter

Quarters, Douglas County, Nebraska. Winter Quarters was a temporary camp organized by leaders of the Church as a refuge for Saints forced from Nauvoo until they could move further west. Harsh conditions and limited supplies and shelter made life a constant challenge as Emmerette tried to care for her family. Alfred was called to the office of Bishop and Emmerette busied herself in her efforts to support him and aid those for whom he was responsible.

In the spring of 1847, Emmerette was busy making the final preparations to move west. She and Alfred had acquired wagons and ox teams, and were excited to be putting the long, cold winter of waiting behind them. They were anxiously looking forward to beginning the trek to the Salt Lake Valley. Once again, their faith was tested. Alfred became involved in an accident and broke his leg. As they looked at the situation, they knew they would not be able to travel with the wagon company preparing to leave. The Randalls decided to give their wagons, teams and provisions to Brother Heber C. Kimball to use for the widows and orphans that would be traveling in the company. They would remain behind until Alfred was healed. In the meantime, they would work towards another wagon, team and more provisions.

The next summer found the Randalls again ready to migrate west. They became members of the Heber C. Kimball wagon train which left Winter Quarters on June 7, 1848. The company arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, September 24, 1848.

Alfred set to work and built an adobe home on a piece of land, which was located on West Temple just north of Temple Square. They quickly prepared for the winter and were delighted to be in the midst of their friends and close to the headquarters of the Church once again.

In future years, Emmerette bid her husband farewell four times as the presidency of the Church called him to travel east to help transport immigrants across the plains to the Great Salt Lake Valley. Alfred was charged with not only helping immigrant travelers, but also given the extra responsibility of obtaining supplies and special items, and transported them to the Salt Lake Valley.

Again, Emmerette had the privilege of helping build a Temple. Ground was broken February 14, 1853, for the Salt Lake Temple. She willingly volunteered for assignments through the Relief Society, which included feeding and making clothing for the construction workers. Forty years later, she was thrilled to participate in the Salt Lake Temple dedication on April 6, 1893.

Alfred and Emmerette moved their family to Ogden, Davis County, Utah in 1867, where they became involved in the construction and operation of a woolen mill. Ogden was where Emmerette set down her roots and decided to stay.

In 1855 Emmerette supported Albert when he was called to serve a mission to the White Mountains of Beaver Valley, and then again in 1865 when he was sent to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaiian Islands). Hard work and her unfailing faith saw her through years of Albert's service and absence.

During the invasion of Johnston's Army during the winter of 1857-58, Emmerette took up her stair carpet to make a warm suit for her oldest son, Charles. He was assigned to stand guard in Echo Canyon above the Salt Lake Valley, with orders to notify the Church leaders if the army started moving towards the valley.\*\*

Emmerette was in the historic move south when the Saints left their homes determined it was better to burn them to the ground than surrender to the army and face persecutions once again. She camped with her family near Provo, Utah until negotiations remedied the situation and the displaced families were advised they could return to their homes.

Emmerette saw many historical events take place in her lifetime. One which had significant personal meaning to her was when her son, Charles Franklin, became one of the first riders for the Pony Express. She was so proud the day he rode into the valley carrying the Proclamation of the United States President James Buchanan to the Utah Territory Governor, Alfred Cumming, regarding the Utah War. Charles had ridden from dark to daylight over 110 miles, to participate in this historical event.

Polygamy was a principle that had been adopted by members of the Church to help care for the widows and their families during the desperate times of persecution and mob violence. Emmerette was the first of five wives married to Alfred Randall. His efforts to provide for his five families took much of his time, which left many of the daily work responsibilities to his wives and their children. Emmerette faced the challenges of polygamy with faith and determination. She was ever faithful in caring for her children and maintaining her home and property.

In 1879, when her son Levi, moved with his new bride into a little house in Ogden they invited Emmerette to live with them, which she did. She took with her a Lady Franklin Stove, a large round table and a wash stand with a marble top. Alfred had brought these articles across the plains by ox team and had provided the same for each of his five wives.

Later, Emmerette moved in with her daughter Martha, who also lived in Ogden. As Emmerette got older her eyesight became very poor and she became restricted in the activities she could do. Martha was able to devote much of her time to helping Emmerette.

Emmerette loved the Gospel and liked to go to Relief Society Meeting in the Ogden Fourth Ward. Her young granddaughter, Nora, would walk with her to the meetings and stay to see her home.

Alfred died on March 21, 1891 in Ogden, Weber, Utah, and was buried in the Ogden City Cemetery.

At the age of eighty, Emmerette Louisa Davis Randall passed away on March 12, 1898 at the home of her daughter, Martha Luty, at Ogden, Weber, Utah. She was buried beside her husband in the Ogden City Cemetery, Ogden, Weber, Utah.

The life of a plural wife was not always easy. Many of the household needs, as well as the upkeep and day to day maintenance of the Alfred and Emmerette Randall home and property rested upon Emmerette as her husband was called to serve in his Church responsibilities, as well as fulfill his father role to his many children. Weeks, months and sometimes years went by without seeing Alfred. In spite of these challenges, Emmerette

remained dedicated to her husband, family and religious beliefs. She was an example of true commitment.

Emmerette was a faithful member of the Church and felt there was no sacrifice too great. She was a devoted wife and mother. She was ever willing to give all she had to someone in need and often sought opportunities to do just that. She was loved by all who knew her. Emmerette Louisa Davis Randall was a noble and righteous woman.

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The author of the original life sketch of Emmerette Louisa Davis Randall is unknown. This life sketch is a compilation of information from the original sketch as well as other stories and records collected and preserved in the Family History Library of Karla K. Oswald.

Dates, locations and other vital facts have been compared to and verified with records preserved within the FamilySearch data base maintained by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints available at FamilySearch.org.

Some of the information within this life sketch can also be found and may have been taken from:

*"Pioneer Women of Faith and Fortitude"* – Daughters of the Utah Pioneers – 2483

*"A Genealogy of a Branch of the Randall Family"* by Paul K. Randall

*"A Summary of the Genealogical Research on the Ancestry of Emmerette Louisa Davis, Wife of Alfred Randall, With a Few Interesting Stories and Facts"* prepared by Cleo Jones Johnson - 1962

\*Quote taken from *'A Genealogy of a Branch of the Randall Family'* by Paul K. Randall

\*\*Information taken from notes left by Verna Randall Jones, daughter of Levi Leander Randall included in the original life sketch.

*Note of interest:* Family tradition tells that Emmerette and Alfred's daughter, Sarah Lavern, was engaged to marry Joseph F. Smith, who would later become President of the Church. Smith was called to serve a mission and while gone Sarah died. When Smith returned, Sarah was sealed to Smith in the Endowment House at Salt Lake, Utah. After the ceremony, Emmerette gave a supper for the Randall and Smith families.

"A Life Sketch of Emmerette Louisa Davis Randall" was compiled by Karla Knapp Oswald - revised November 2014